

CLAIM OR CLAIMS

I/WE CLAIM:

1. In a system for distributed computing in a health care environment in which multiple different applications are in use connected on a common computer network, the improvement comprising

a clinical exchange server on the network, the clinical exchange server including memory, the clinical exchange server programmed (i) to maintain a reference table, the reference table including a list of applications on the network and information about the patient identification number used by each application, (ii) to maintain a list of events reported to it by other applications on the network and (iii) to respond to inquiries from a first application about an event recorded by a second application by transmitting a query to the second application based on the information in the reference table and the list of reported events.

2. The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the clinical exchange server also maintains an abstract about the events sent to it to facilitate exchange of information between the applications.

3. The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the reference table includes a master patient index identification code assigned to the patient as well as the application specific identification code assigned to the patient by each application.

4. The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the clinical exchange server also stores health insurance information about each patient so that such health insurance information can easily be accessed by any of the applications.

5. A computer network for operation by a healthcare delivery enterprise, the network including a plurality of servers operating a plurality of application programs, the network comprising

a clinical exchange server including a storage device, the clinical exchange server programmed to store in the storage device a reference table, the reference including a master patient identifier for each patient, a list of application programs, and any separate identifying code used for the patient by any of the application programs, so that the identifying code used by an application for a patient can be found by accessing the reference table, the clinical exchange server further programmed to facilitate information exchange between the applications by using the reference table to extract information from an application requested by another application.

6. The computer network of claim 5 wherein the clinical exchange server also maintains a table of events associated with patients, the table of events including identifying information about the events and the identification of the application holding information about the event.

7. The computer network of claim 6 wherein the event table also includes an abstract about each of the events.

8. The computer network of claim 5 wherein the clinical exchange server also maintain health insurance information about the patient that can be access by another application.

9. A process for allowing interchange of information among communicating computer systems which have collected healthcare information about patients, the information stored in the form of events, the process comprising constructing the systems to support the following two interfaces:

a get updates interface that includes information identifying the patient and the requesting system and returns a data table containing a description of events stored by other systems involving the patient; and

a get detail interface that includes information identifying the patient, the requesting system and the event and returns a detailed description of the event.

10. A process as claimed in claim 9 wherein the two interfaces are always routed through a clinical exchange server that maintains a list of events and the location of the systems storing data about those events.

11. A process as claimed in claim 9 wherein the two interfaces are implemented in HTML format, XML format, HL-7 format or a combination of those formats.

12. A process as claimed in claim 9 wherein each interface request also includes access identifying information to provide security for the information exchange, with the retrieval of information being restricted by organization and identity of the requesting person.

13. A process as claimed in claim 9 wherein each interface request also includes an audit string to uniquely identify each request for auditing purposes.